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ABSTRACT

A study determined how including significant amounts of writing in varied forms for different audiences throughout a four-year baccalaureate program in nursing affected professional practice. Subjects were graduating seniors and practicing nurses from a writing intensive baccalaureate program (College A) and graduating seniors and nurses from a non-writing intensive one (College B). Subjects were surveyed regarding the effects of college writing experiences on their professional preparation, communications competence, academic attitudes, cognitive development, and personal narratives. Results indicated that students in College A demonstrated higher order writing; more professional writing endeavors; better understanding of the importance of writing in practice; degrees of competency and positive attitudes earlier in the program of studies; and ease of transition in using writing in practice. (RS)

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NURSES WRITING: THE UNDERGRADUATE YEARS AND BEYOND

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PURPOSE: To determine how including significant amounts of writing in varied forms for different audiences throughout a four-year baccalaureate program in nursing affects professional practice.

SAMPLE: Graduating seniors and practicing nurses from a writing intensive baccalaureate program (College A) and graduating seniors and nurses from a non-writing intensive one (College B).

METHODOLOGY: Survey of opinions regarding the effects of college writing experiences on their professional preparation, communications competence, academic attitudes, cognitive development, and personal narratives.

INSTRUMENTS: Questionnaires, written reflections and group interviews.

COLLEGE A

	Practicing Nurses	Graduating Seniors
Professional Growth: Utilization of writing	0 grant writing engaged in writing tasks that serve higher level professional work practice/needs	plan to write grants increase in scholarly activities
Communication: Skill competency	grew more competent in 6 out of 9 areas: *thesis* *revision* *clarification* *editing* *professional language* *documentation*	grew more competent in 3 out of 9 areas: *thesis* *revision* *clarification*
Self-Appraisal: Changes in attitudes	did not change in 5 out of 5 areas -- felt about the same; *confidence* *ease* *valuing* *problem solving* *pleasure*	did not change in 5 out of 5 areas -- felt about the same; *confidence* *ease* *valuing* *problem solving* *pleasure*
Cognition: Development over time	did not change in 3 out of 4 areas -- felt about the same: *recall* *understanding* *decision making*	did not change in 3 out of 4 areas -- felt about the same: *understanding* *clarification* *decision making*

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COLLEGE B	
Practicing Nurses	**Graduating Seniors**
0 grant writing	plan to write grants
grew more competent in 2 of 9 areas: *organization* *logic*	minimal gain in 3 of 9 areas: *thesis* *revision* *clarification*
grew more competent in 5 of 5 areas: *confidence* *ease* *valuing* *problem solving* *pleasure*	grew more competent in 5 of 5 areas: *confidence* *ease* *valuing* *problem solving* *pleasure*
grew more competent in 3 of 4 areas: *recall* *understanding* *decision making*	grew more competent in 3 of 4 areas: *recall* *understanding* *decision making*

Questionnaire Response Comparisons

Interpretations

College A demonstrates higher order writing, more professional writing endeavors and better understanding of the importance of writing in practice. Comments suggest better preparation for writing in practice.

Students at College A achieved degrees of competency early in the program of studies.

Students at College A appear to form positive attitudes early in the program, whereas at College B writing occurs at the senior level.

College A demonstrated ease of transition in using writing in practice.